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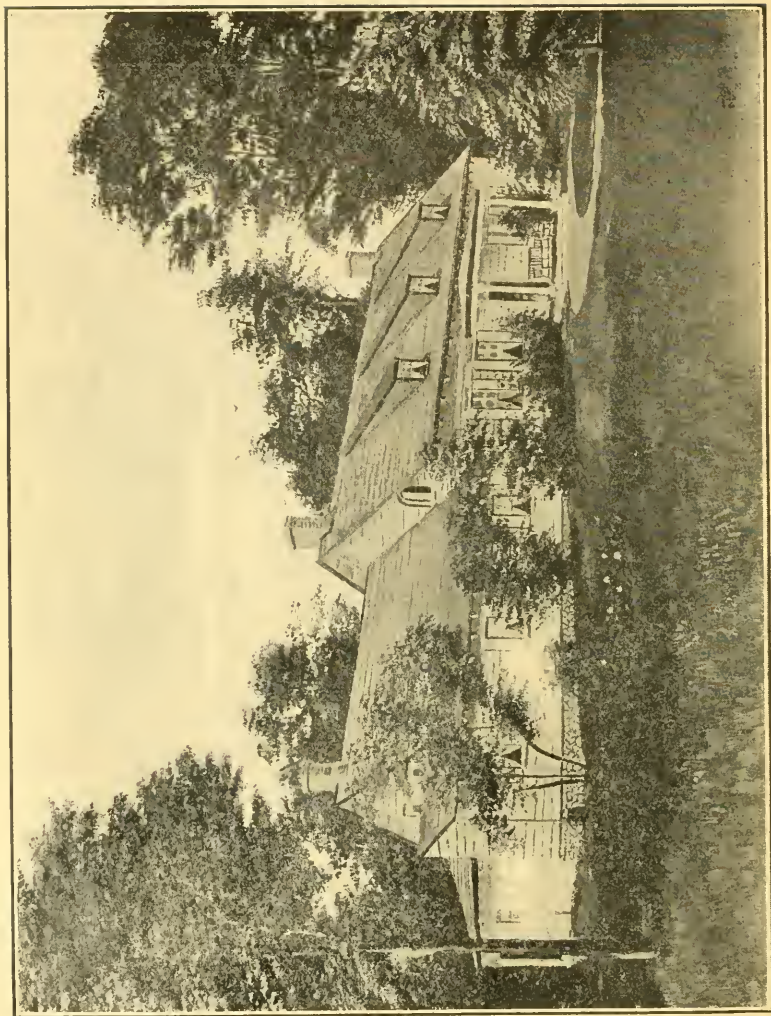


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### THE HOMESTEAD

(From a Painting by Rev. Robert Fulton Crary, D.D.)



# The Homestead of a Colonial Dame

## A Monograph

By Alice Crary Sutcliffe

Author of

“Robert Fulton and The Clermont”

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1909

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This Monograph is Dedicated  
with affection and honor  
To my Mother,  
Mrs. Robert Fulton Crary,  
(née Agnes Boyd Van Kleeck)  
the Colonial Dame  
who owns, and adorns  
by her presence,  
The Homestead of her Grandmother,  
of the fifth generation,  
Madam Brett.



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## PREFACE.

A strange coincidence of historical significance places midway in the annals of time the record of the homestead built by a pioneer settler, Madam Brett, the first white woman to establish her home in the highlands of Hudson's river, exactly one hundred years after its discovery and nearly a century before that river provided the historic scene for the successful application of steam to navigation.

The names of the discoverer and the inventor have been associated by a grateful populace for worthy remembrance. We venture to add a link to the interesting chain, assuming that the hardy explorer and the indefatigable inventor would gladly share their abundant honor.

1609	1709	1807
HUDSON.	BRETT.	FULTON.

So we group them and are glad of the trio of worthies, so generous in their contributions to the river settlers of this generation.

Two other felicitous circumstances blend in this harmony of history:

First: Tradition says that Sir Roeloffe Schenck, whose descendant, Major Henry Schenck, occupied the homestead during the days of the Revolution, sailed from Amsterdam as Super Cargo with Henry Hudson in the Half Moon.

Second: The eldest grandson of Robert Fulton and bearer of his name, the Reverend Robert Fulton Crary, D.D., now lives in the old mansion which, through the inheritance of several generations, has become the property of his wife, a descendant of Madam Brett.

Rarely does history so gracefully weave the branches of any one family tree. Here, united in significant harmony, they plead the excuse for this slight volume of recital and recollection.

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Miss Florence Guernsey, Miss McKinnon, Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, Wm. E. Verplanck, Esq., and the Reverend Cornelius Brett, D.D., for original data here presented.



THE HALL. NEW STAIRWAY AT LEFT  
(From a Painting by Rev. Robert Fulton Crary, D.D.)



## HOSPITALITY.

The open door,—the out-stretched hand  
Of welcome to the dear home land.

The flowing bowl,—the loaf of bread,—  
The pillow for the weary head:

The open hearth where flaming fires  
Awake the heart to new desires:

These are the gentle gifts of home  
In trust for you if you will come.

ALICE CRARY.

*(Reprint from Good Housekeeping.)*





## THE HOMESTEAD OF A COLONIAL DAME.

To-day I walked in Madam Brett's garden. Blue-birds were nesting in the apple tree and black briar was in early berry; squirrels frisked among the trumpet vines; and "seven-sister" roses, scattering fresh fragrance, promised constancy to the end of time.

In this place lingers the happiness of the past; contentment is a present condition; it can be truly said "the lot has fallen in a fair ground, and we have a goodly heritage." So shall its story be told to the generation of this Twentieth Century,—the story of the Homestead of a Colonial Dame, made worthy to be a twice-told tale, because two hundred years have borne witness to her wise provision.

To know Madam Brett's reason for building her homestead in the then wilderness of the Fish Kill, we must consider her inheritance from her father, Francis Rombout, born in the town of Hasselt in the Province of Flanders, a good man and true. He was a Huguenot, who in 1654 sailed as super cargo to the new world. This nautical position involved the superintendence of the commercial business of the ship; it was an honorable appointment of responsibility and trust. In good faith Rombout had qualified and accepted the service, but after his arrival he was obliged to sue the captain for his wages, a courageous undertaking for a mere stripling in a strange land.

Having determined to settle here, he is said to have

brought with him some articles of furniture, among which was the Dutch Cass of ebony and rosewood, for years an attractive feature in the lower west room of the homestead. He also introduced the first table linen ever used in America, another personal importation. Prospering as a merchant trader he acquired a valuable property on De Heeres Street, now Broadway. On it he built a fine stone house, surrounded it with an orchard and garden, and it became a worthy home to which he successively brought to wife:

1st: Aeltje Wessels, on the 31st of May, 1665.

2nd: Anna Elisabeth Maschop, widow of War-nart Wessels, on August 8th, 1675.

3rd: Helena Teller Van Ball, eldest daughter of William Teller, on September 8th, 1683.

The persevering bridegroom was an elder in the Dutch Church and generously supported it with contributions of beaver skins. There he brought his four children for Christening:

Johannis, by the first wife; baptized August 12th, 1666, who probably died early. By his second union there were no children, and by his third, there were duly brought to the Christian font:

Jannetje, baptized Sept. 5th, 1684.

Catheryna, baptized May 25th, 1687.

Johannis, baptized June 12th, 1689.

Of these children only one survived, our heroine, Catheryna, whose strong personality and characteristic record of achievement have provided a favorite theme for historians of the Hudson river.

Rombout's third wife, Helena,\* had already matched his startling record of matrimonial alliances. As she

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\*Helena Rombout's father, William Teller, the rich fur trader, had sailed from Amsterdam in the good ship "Brindle Cow"—which probably tossed more than her horns; had gone to Albany as Corporal at Fort Orange, and later settled at Beaver Wyck where he became Watchmaester. Thence he led an expedition against threatening Indians of the Mohawk, and subsequently was one of the four original Patentees of Schenectady.

was his third wife, so he was her third husband, for she had previously been widowed; first, of Cornelius Bogardus, son of Dominie Everardus Bogardus and the famous Anneke Jans; and, second, of Jan Hendricksen Van Ball.

Rombout soon became a man of prominence in New Amsterdam and was unafraid to enter the political arena of the day. Successively he served as Schepen under the Dutch rule, a judicial duty with an attached salary of 250 guilders; and as Alderman under the English rule, which appointment he received seven times. In 1665 the Dutch Court of the Schout, Burgomasters and Schepens had become the Mayor's Court of the City of New York under the revocation of the first and proclamation of the second, by Governor Nicolls, who bravely proclaimed the new organization to consist of "Mayor, Alderman and Sheriff, according to the custom of England in other of His Majesty's Corporations."

In 1673, at the time of the recapture of the city by the Dutch under Captain Anthony Colve, Rombout was serving as Alderman and was one of the number nominated by the Burghers for election in compliance with an order issued by the Council of War, dated New Orange, August 15th, 1673: "That the community should assemble at the City Hall and nominate six persons as Burgomasters and fifteen as Schepen, to wit, from the wealthiest inhabitants and those only who are of the Reformed Christian Religion."

At an earlier date he had served as lieutenant under Captain Beekman, in an expedition against the Swedes who threatened to invade the Dutch property rights. This was possibly the exploit of September 5th, 1656, when "after the sermon" on a fair Sunday morning the venturesome party set sail for Delaware Bay and by a

brief and bloodless war removed the flag of Sweden from the American continent.

Apparently Rombout changed his political views as became a settler in a new land, and so successfully did he serve the public that in 1679 he was appointed Mayor of the city.

Two years before he accepted this important office his predecessor, Mayor Stephanus Van Cortlandt, in contemplation of the already recognized problem of water supply for the city, had wisely ordered the digging of six wells for supplementary service to the first public well at the gateway of the fort. The six pools were known respectively by the names of the property owners, whose houses were in nearest proximity: and that which was opened at Broadway and Exchange Place was called "Mr. Rombout's well."

It is said that the water in all these wells was brackish and undesirable except as a protection against fire, when the department, the old-time bucket brigade, ranged themselves at the nearest source of supply and caught up their leathern buckets. Citizens were fined who did not assemble for work when they heard the Fire Cry, "Val! Val!"

Struggles of the "powers that were" seemed as rife then as in modern civics; on Long Island riotous meetings were held in resistance to the collection of the excise-tax, and in the now phenomenally placid village of Esopus, the Dutch and French held "undue and unlawful gatherings." Insubordination to law was widespread, and finally at a regular session of the Court of Assizes it was ordered that as several persons had presumed to exhibit "causeless and vexatious accusations and indictments" against magistrates and other public officials, they should not thereafter offer such accusation unless the grounds had been previously examined and pronounced sufficient by two justices of the peace.

The first lightning from this thunderous cloud fell upon Francis Rombout, who in 1683 was charged by the grand jury that he had when in office with his associates "as a false traitor" to His Majesty, plotted and practised innovations in government and the subversion of the known and fundamental laws of the realm of England, denying trial by jury to John Tudor, a born subject of the king, and an attorney living in the city. Rombout postponed the evil day of enquiry, and petitioned that his trial be referred to the next session. At that date he pleaded the insufficiency of the indictment, saying that it was founded on a judgment given against Tudor in the Mayor's Court, of which he was but a single member. Ultimately he was acquitted and his decision against the troublesome British subject was upheld. This Tudor,—John by name,—seems to have been a pestilent fellow, and it further appeared that the reason for his arrest and trial before Mayor Rombout had been to compel the restoration of the money he got at play of Abraham Smith. The equitable Court furthermore decided that Rombout's act was "not treason or any crime, but justice done to the party concerned therein."\*

There were plenty of treasons, stratagems and spoils; small wonder when an honest man became unwarily enmeshed in a net of political intrigue.

Another interesting anecdote of the official perplexities of Mayor Rombout is narrated in Jasper Danker's and Peter Slayter's "Journal of a Voyage to New York, 1679-1680."

These men of Friesland, Preaching Brothers of the Labadist Order, were secretly prospecting for the establishment of a Colony of their sect, which they ultimately formed in Maryland.

Danker, who was scribe, related that they were sum-

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\*See "History of the City of New York," Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer.

moned by order of the Governor, to appear at Mayor Rombout's house to give account of themselves. Accompanied by the woman with whom they lodged, they obeyed the summons with surprise. Magistrates were in attendance when Rombout addressed the men. "Friends," he said, "we have summoned you here not because we have anything to say to you, or have any debt to claim, or because any one has sought of us to demand of you any such thing, or to summon you." He further explained that it was because they had been so long in the country without having reported their names, professions, or purposes.

The strangers answered that there was no law or order which required such report,—that the treatment struck them as strange.

Rombout replied, "You know well it is the custom in Europe."

They pleaded that it was only so required upon the frontiers.

To this he answered, "We are no frontier, but a capitol, and it must and shall be so in the future."

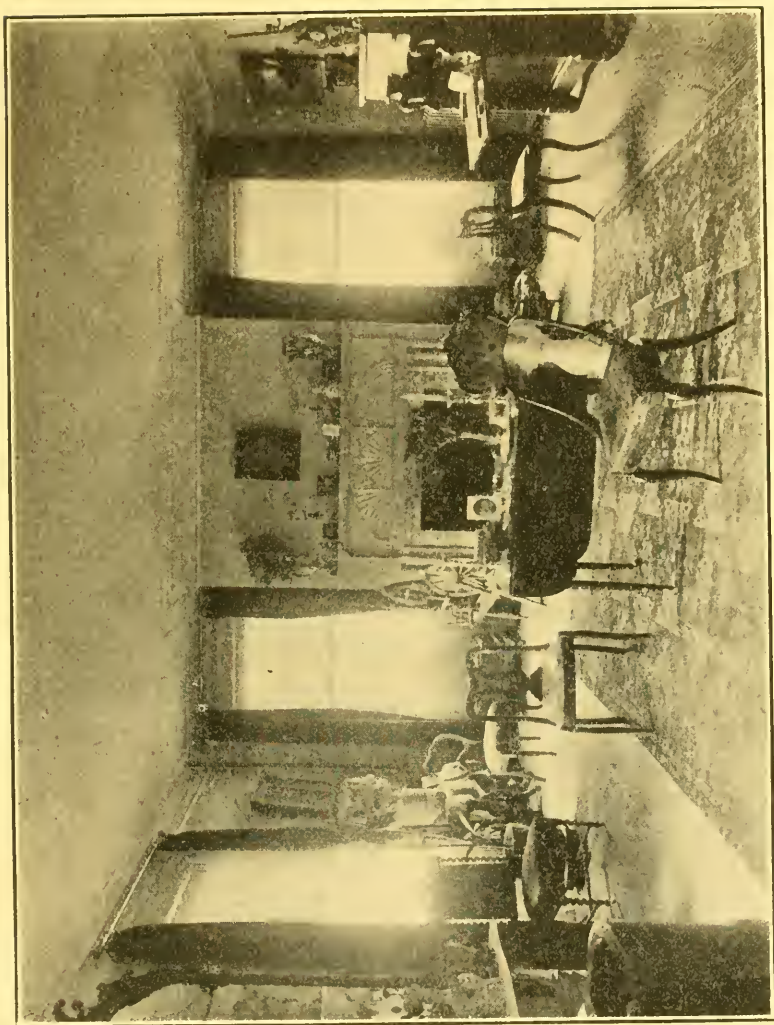
Dankers explained that he was a wine-racker (one who put wine in casks), and his companion a theologian who had studied at Leyden: that both lived near Leeuwarden in Friesland of the Netherlands.

Rombout then subjected them to further enquiry: why did they come; what was their purpose and intention?

They answered vaguely that they had come to look at the country.

"How to look at the country?" he asked, and to explain his brusque questioning, he added, "Some come to look at the cities, other at the fortifications; some to learn the mode of government and policy, others the manner of regulating the militia; others again to learn the climate and times and seasons,—and you run and





THE PARLOR  
(From a Photograph)



travel through the country without giving any notion why!"

They tried to explain their visit by expressing interest in the nature and fertility of the soil, and further nonchalantly stated "we may perhaps go around mornings and evenings."

At this Mayor Rombout, reaching an important point, enquired whether they wished to be regarded as citizens or foreigners.

"As foreigners," they decided.

"Well then," he declared, "you are forbidden to carry on trade, particularly with the inhabitants,—that is, to sell anything to private persons, but you may dispose of it to merchants who sell to private individuals." He told them that the privilege or "burgher right" must be paid for by beavers; each beaver to be reckoned at five guilders in Holland money or twenty-five guilders in *zeewan*, the Dutch term for wampum. This privilege of trade, he said, was prohibited to all persons non-resident of the city, and they must be treated like others. Finally they were allowed to go in peace, having promised to cheerfully comply with the law, and Rombout commanded them to travel nowhere, particularly to Albany, without permission from the Governor, which permission they promised to ask.

Probably this interview with the Preaching Brothers reflects more personal light upon the character of Francis Rombout than is elsewhere contained; other references are but statements of his many public offices. He is here shown to be a man of stern, yet kindly presence, and of wise sagacity and discrimination.

As early as 1667 Rombout was associated in business with Gulyne Ver Planck, a trader, whose similarity of interests, political and commercial, led the men to a firm friendship. Verplanck had also served the

town as Schepen and Alderman, and his residence and warehouse were on "The Strant," now Pearl Street.

In that year the two men jointly applied for an attachment on goods in their hands, belonging to Francis Young, "at present in Virginia." Again in 1668, Rombout alone sued Balthazar D'Haut for a parcel of Rye sold and delivered. Rombout showed his books, and won the case against the verbal statements of the defendant.

Other minor suits reveal the mutual activity of Verplanck and Rombout, and in 1672 they instituted proceedings against one Francis Gibbons, master of the ship "Hopewell," for non-delivery of goods shipped in due season to Barbadoes.

In September, 1690, Rombout was appointed by Lieutenant Governor Jacob Leisler, one of the Board of Admiralty for the confiscation of vessels taken from the French. He continued in this position, and is said later to have been Judge of the Admiralty.

During January, 1691, he appeared before a notary, Wm. Bogardus, to acknowledge his last will and testament, and ratified an anti-nuptial agreement with his wife, Helena, entered upon September 20th, 1683. Instead of the agreed 1500 guilders, he bequeathed to her at this later date 4000 guilders, Holland money, and the whole interest and income of the common estate, "until she marries again,"—a natural assumption of thought for a third husband.

This fact shows that Rombout had prospered beyond his early expectation; but he qualified the legacy by the alternative "or to the time the testator's daughter, Catheryna Rombout, gotten by said wife, shall come to marriage or her age." He also stated that he had given to his daughter "his land in the Wappins."

In affectionate fatherly thought for his child, then only four years of age, he appointed four persons to

serve as guardians of his daughter's education and estate, "in case of the death or marriage of his widow."

These guardians were Wm. Teller, Peter de la Noy, the Mayor of New York; Doctor Samuel Staats, a New Yorker by birth, who had studied medicine in Holland; and Paul Richards, a rich wine merchant, who had vineyards on Long Island.

Probably Rombout had knowledge, through ill-health, of his approaching demise, for he died soon after the will was drawn. It was translated by Peter de la Noy, proved before the Court, April 21, 1691, and the following year Helena, the widow, filed an inventory of the effects of the late Francis Rombout.

Twelve years later, in 1703, the widow was still living in the West ward, and the name Roger Brett, "gentleman," appears among the residents of the East ward. Brett was of Somersetshire, England, a brave Lieutenant of the British Navy. He soon won the heart of his fair young bride, Catheryna Rombout, and November 25th, 1703, Lord Cornbury granted them a marriage license. Late that year Brett was listed as "A Master of Family in the City of New York," a term for a married man.

It is said that when Queen Anne sent out her erratic young cousin, Lord Cornbury, to be Governor of the Province, Roger Brett was among the English gentlemen who followed. For the three subsequent years, 1703-1706, his name appears as a vestryman of Trinity Church, New York, and letters are extant\* to show

\*An interesting letter from Lord Cornbury is appended as indicative of the post and travelling facilities of primitive days:

New York, July 14, 1709.

Sr.

Yesterday sending my boy to the Post house to see if the Pensilvania Post had brought me any letters, at his return he told me there was a letter for you at the Post house. I sent for it not knowing but it might be of consequence to you and send it here inclosed there is noe news of the arrivall of the fleet at Boston yet but from Barbados there is an account that a packet boat arrived these say that the fleet was sailed soe they may be expected every hour. On sunday morning last my Daughter sailed out of the hook with a fair wind; she gave her service to Mrs. Brett and yourself, I intreat you to give my respects to Mrs. Brett and believe that I am

Sr,

Your most humble servant,  
(Signed) Cornbury

Mr. Brett.—1

that the Lieutenant was a firm friend of the new Provincial Governor.

In 1707, Rombout's widow departed this life and Edward, Viscount Cornbury, under the impression that she died intestate, appointed Roger Brett administrator of her estate. But the previous year Madam Rombout had made a will, and this was duly found and admitted to probate. Evidently she had tried to do justice in varying scale to her several children. To the oldest son by her first marriage, Cornelius Bogardus, she bequeathed five pounds, current money, "having before that time paid considerable sums of money to him and for his use." To her youngest daughter, Catheryna, wife of Roger Brett, "the sum of nine pence, current money." No explanation apparently accompanied this tiny legacy, but the "land in the Wappins" and the ownership of the De Heeres Street property probably were the unnamed considerations which balanced the apparent inequality.

The remainder of her estate, real or personal, she bequeathed to the children of her second marriage; to her son, Henry Van Ball; her daughter, Maria, wife of Isaac de Peyster; Margaret, wife of Nicholas Evertson; Helena, wife of Gualthemus Du Bois; and Rachel, wife of Petrus Bayard; provided that they do invest one-sixth part of the estate for the use of her daughter Hannah, during her life.

\* Roger Brett arose to the occasion of necessity and prayed Lord Cornbury not to permit the executors of the estate, Henry Van Ball, and the sons-in-law previously mentioned, to enter into their duties, until they shall have given security for the due performance of them. Six months later they were granted powers of administration.

Inborn in Madam Brett's veins was the love of the forest and the hardihood of the pioneer settler. She



and her husband had, apparently, been living in the home of her father, the late Mayor Rombout, but with a brave determination to conquer the wilderness which lay in virgin purity upon the banks of the Hudson river, they decided to build a country house. To this end, on June 8th, 1708, Roger Brett, gentleman, and Catheryna, his wife, mortgaged to James Emott the dwelling house, etc., built by Francis Rombout, deceased, and now occupied by the said Roger Brett and Catheryna, his wife, which they described "being situated on the Broadway which leads from the English Church down to the Fort Anne, upon the west side of Broadway, for 240 pounds current money."

To understand the strength of their desire and their justification in leaving the attractions of New York, we must now return to trace the several steps in a transaction of extreme importance achieved by Catheryna's father, the redoubtable Francis Rombout.

In the year 1682 Rombout and his partner, Gulyne Verplanck, had filed a petition for a grant of land, and were thereby licensed to purchase from the Indians, the Wappingers and other local tribes, the fertile and fair tract now known as the Rombout Precinct. The transaction was peaceably accomplished. A legend is extant that Rombout bargained with the Indians for "all the land that he could see" and this being conceded, he craftily climbed to the top of Mt. Beacon to expand his vision. Family tradition states that the Patentees sat at a table (one cannot but wonder, where placed?) and opposite sat the delegation of Indian chiefs. A goodly sum of Royalls (coins) was placed before them, and repeatedly the Indians pushed them back, saying, "More, More." Finally the proportion was established to the content of the keen-eyed warriors and their Indian Deed of Sale, on record in 1683, was drawn and witnessed. A copy of this very interest-

ing document is appended to this narrative page 52. So diplomatic were the relations established between the Patentees and Indians in this remarkable transaction, that there was never a hostile break upon the peaceable and quiet possession,—a great tribute, not only to the wise establishment of the white men, but also to the justice and proper feeling of the dispossessed Indians.

On the 8th day of February, 1682, the license for the Rombout Patent was given by Governor Thomas Dongan, Commander in Chief of the Province of New York; this is stated upon the original Exemplification now in possession of the present owner of the Homestead.\* This grant must have been among the first public acts of the newly appointed Governor, for Dongan's own commission was dated during the same month. He was a younger son of an Irish baronet of distinction, Sir John Dongan, and has been described "an active and prudent governor" and "a man of integrity, moderation and genteel manners." Upon his arrival in New York in August, 1683, a grand banquet at the City Hall emphasized his welcome, and it is on record that he "received large and plentiful entertainment."

The application for the Rombout Patent was made during the reign of Charles the Second, signed by his newly appointed Governor Dongan, in England, and later ratified in the first year of the reign of King James II, former Duke of York. It is interesting to note that Rombout and Verplanck had chosen a timely season to make their application, for within a month after his elevation to the throne, James the Second wrote to Governor Dongan directing him to proclaim the accession and to make to the people of New York "certain gracious promises." This vague yet generous predic-

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\*See Appendix, page 47

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tion seems to have been fulfilled by Dongan's speedy renewal of Manorial Grants of Land, the Rombout Patent, the Patroonship "Rensselaerwyck," and the subsequent grant of the Manor of Livingston in 1686, having been notable illustrations of British bounty.

The Rombout Patent included 85,000 acres in the highlands of the Hudson, the land extending from the Fishkill mountains nearly to the present line of Poughkeepsie and half way to the Connecticut line. Verplanck died before the exemplification of the patent, and Jacobus Kipp, who married his widow, substituted as representative for the interests of Verplanck's children. Stephanus Van Cortlandt, who was of kin to Madam Brett, by this time had been admitted a co-partner, so the original grant of the 85,000 acres was to be divided among three partners.

Kipp was a rich brewer and extensive land owner. He and his wife, the former widow Verplanck, continued to live in New York, later upon Long Island, and never took up residence upon the newly granted land, leaving this honor for Verplanck's son. Van Cortlandt also died, leaving by will his third to his widow, Gertrude Van Cortlandt.

In 1707, or as the old record states, "in the sixth year of the reign of Queen Anne," Roger Brett and Catheryna, his wife, instituted proceedings in the Supreme Court to effect a division of the property. Ultimately, Sheriff Noxon, with the aid of twelve men in the partition, divided the immense tract into three long narrow parcels, each containing a stretch of river front, and water privileges by adjointure to the two creeks, the Fish Kill and Wappingers. Roger Brett and his wife obtained Lot Number One, consisting of the southerly portion on the river and Lot Number One at the mouth of the Wappinger creek. Verplanck's heirs received Lot Number Two, on the river and "in

the Middle'' on the Wappinger creek, and the Van Cortlandt heirs obtained Lot Number Three, on the river and the head on the Wappinger creek.

Madam Brett and her husband had no cause to complain of the division: they found themselves possessed of the fertile valley of the Fishkill creek, a goodly stretch of land upon the river front, and the north side of the Wappinger's creek from its mouth to beyond the present site of Wappinger's Falls. Peaceable Indians dwelt upon some portions of the land, but apparently never transgressed the quiet laws of friendship. In the Verplanck family an interesting Map of the Rombout Precinct is preserved, made by John Holwell, April, 1689.\*

So much for the division of the famous territory. The partition having been effected, and the mortgage secured upon the De Heeres Street property, which was subsequently (in 1713-1716) sold in two parcels to Thomas George of New York, Roger Brett and his young wife moved into the wilderness to make their home. Why did they choose the exact location occupied by the homestead? It is hard to determine, for many another fairer sight might have been equally well adapted to their needs.

It is easy now for Madam Brett's descendants, even in their moments of regret that she provided for them no river view, to rejoice that she had the wisdom to select a site upon the trolley-line, and within such a convenient walk to the Post Office, but obviously these advantages were not then potent. Perhaps the river front would have been deemed unsafe because the Indians were inclined to follow the fishing banks; perhaps a storm had helped to clear the virgin forest growth from this particular stretch of lowland, where springs were a-plenty, and crops would be shielded

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\*Reproduced by permission of the owner, Wm. E. Verplanck, Esq.

from a too great exposure. The adjacent Fish Kill provided a valuable water power for the mill which they reared,—some of these reasons, perhaps all, helped to fix their choice.

The Homestead was securely fashioned, and was a large and roomy structure for primitive days. The foundations of native stone are well laid; the beams of immense hand-hewn timber, and the scalloped red cedar shingles, hand cut and secured by hand-wrought nails, are graceful in simplicity and lasting in quality. Many changes have been made within the home since the days of 1709. The kitchen wing was undoubtedly added at a later date, and the upper story, unfinished for a time, provided lodgings for servants and slaves. In the list of 1714 Roger Brett was recorded the owner of nine slaves. The present front of the house was then the rear, and the original staircase, remembered by one of ripe memory, Mrs. Louisa Benson (a descendant of Madam Brett), ran in quite another direction from the staircase of to-day, or from that second stairway, steep and dark, which was displaced by the present means of ascent.

The foundations show that originally there was a corner fireplace in the northwest room, now the library, and that a steep flight of stairs connected this room with the rear cellar.

In the parlor, a Dutch tiled fireplace was removed more than a hundred years ago to make place for the present charming hand carved wooden mantel which has since encircled the hearthstone of three generations. The northwest room, now the library, was in later days known as "the far-away room," and here the looms were set for spinning.\* No door connected the spinning-room with the present parlor, nor

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\*A silver cup was awarded to the Misses Teller in 1821, for the best spinning of linen flax; it is now owned by the author.





THE ORIGINAL FRONT VIEW OF THE HOMESTEAD  
(From a Painting by Rev. Robert Fulton Crary, D.D.)





was there a door from the hall into the down-stairs bedroom; both of these were opened in 1907, when the present owner made the alterations which brought to the old house the modern comforts of today's civilization.

It is said that Roger Brett and his wife, upon their arrival by sloop up the Hudson river, first landed at the mouth of the Matteawan creek, where a temporary shelter was built near the chosen mill site. For this famous first mill, it is thought that Madam Brett imported grindstones from England, but one writer\* avers that they may have been obtained from Esopus, where a substantial quarry had been opened by Huguenot settlers. The mill occupied a picturesque and beautiful spot,—perhaps the fairest at that early date along the river. The wheel caught the waters from the race-way which led from a cascade at the return of the united streams surrounding "Fairy Isle." Its building was a wise enterprise, and won speedy patronage.

Its completion enabled the owner to avail herself of a power which, unclaimed for centuries, did its beneficent work without grumbling—and was of more value than the service of fifty slaves.

The primitive custom of pounding corn was slow and arduous. The Indians and other early settlers had formerly hollowed the stump of a large tree, polished it smooth and round, and above it suspended, from an elastic sapling, a round stone, which when sprung up and down, pounded the kernels.

It is probable that Madam Brett's mill was built in 1708 with the money acquired by the mortgage upon the De Heeres Street property. The following year, April 9th, 1709, "Roger Brett of the Fishkills in the County of Dutchess, Gentleman, and Catheryna, his wife, sole daughter and heir of Francis Rumbout, late of the City of New York, deceased, conveyed to Wm.

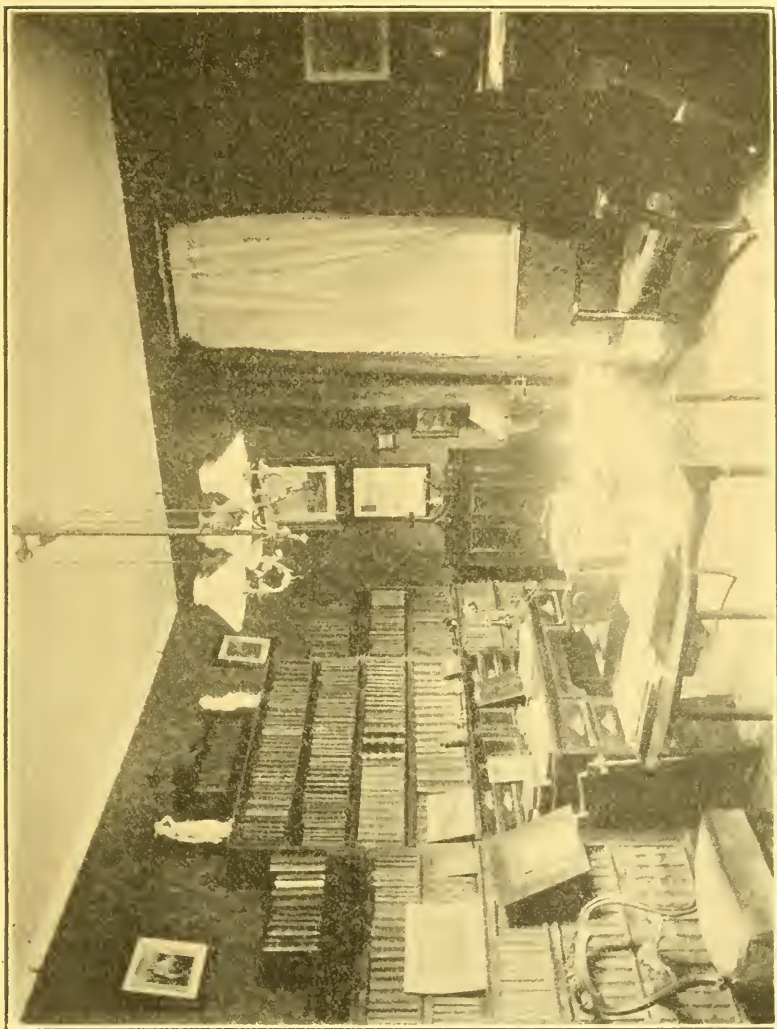
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\*Old Copy of The Fishkill Standard.

Peartrie, merchant of the said city," all that Messaue (English term for Manor House) or tenement and 300 acres of land adjoining, situated in Dutchess County, on the east side of Hudson's river, just above the highlands, and also that Grist Mill standing near said tenement, all of which being on the north side of a certain creek, called the Fishkill."

This was duly acknowledged before Ebenezer Wilson, Mayor. But Madam Brett, speedily regretting the relinquishment of this profitable enterprise, allowed herself the feminine privilege of a "change of mind." The following year she re-acquired it, and continued to supervise its commercial values until 1743, when she sold it to Abraham De Peyster, a kinsman. The inhabitants of Dutchess and Orange Counties for many years depended solely upon this mill for their daily bread. I here quote an interesting article from the *Fishkill Standard*:

"Madam Brett's mill was the central point where the roads from the interior converged on their way to the river. They ran to this place from Hackensack, from Wappingers, and from Wiccopee, formed by grading, widening and bridging the Indian trail into a wagon road. The Indians, after the sale of their lands, had retired beyond Fishkill plains, where they had a village of huts made of stakes overlaid with bark, with a castle consisting of a square, surrounded with palisades, used as an asylum for the old men, women and children, when they went out hunting or on warlike expeditions. At the request of the chiefs, with whom Madam Brett was a great favorite, she visited them in their villages. Until they removed over the mountains and joined the Mohegan nation, of whom they were a tribe, they were in the habit of coming down to the mill with corn, beans and peltries (skins) to exchange for meal, and for years after-



THE LIBRARY, FORMERLY THE SPINNING ROOM

(From a Photograph)



wards their young men crossed the mountain and continued their visits, to shoot pennies from between a split stick with their bow and arrow, at a distance of twelve or fourteen yards, which they would strike nineteen times out of twenty, much to the amusement of persons waiting for their grists."

In 1709, upon the sale of the Messauge, or Manor House, Roger Brett and his wife erected the homestead, later known as the Teller homestead,—a strange return of name in a later generation to that of Madam Brett's mother's maiden name,—for it will be remembered that she was Helena Teller.

The old saying, "All roads lead to Rome," might have been translated "All roads lead to Madam Brett's Mill"; far and wide it was quoted "From Hackensack to Madam Brett's Mill," "From Wiccopee to Madam Brett's Mill," and so, in varying terms, as roads multiplied. The following description, narrated by an old resident of Orange County, is of interest:

"The neighbors and settlers for miles would come with a bag of grain securely fastened upon the back of a horse. When they had all arrived the horses were tied to each other's tails and, mounting the foremost one, he wended his way to the river. With an Indian canoe he would carry over the grain and when ground, return home again in the same fashion."

Three sons were born to Lieutenant and Madam Brett—Francis, named for her father, Mayor Rom-bout; Robert, and Rivery—the latter so called because born upon the Hudson river when his parents were returning from New York, by sloop, to their home.

Rivery died at the age of seventeen years, and the mother must have deeply mourned the death of her youngest lad as he was laid to rest in the forest.

In 1726 she met a tragic sorrow, when her husband, Roger Brett, accompanied by his servant Samuel, re-

turning from New York upon his sailing vessel, was knocked overboard by the boom of the sloop as it entered the mouth of the Fishkill Creek. His body was recovered and is said to have been interred in the burying ground, which still belongs to the family estate.

His untimely death necessitated the widow, already beloved by the Indians and other settlers, to further develop the property, aided by her young sons.

Eleven years later, October 5th, 1737, Francis Brett, her first born, procured a marriage license to wed Catharine Margaret Van Wyck, daughter of General Abraham Van Wyck. The bride had been reared in the famous Van Wyck Homestead at Fishkill Village, immortalized in James Fenimore Cooper's novel, "The Spy."

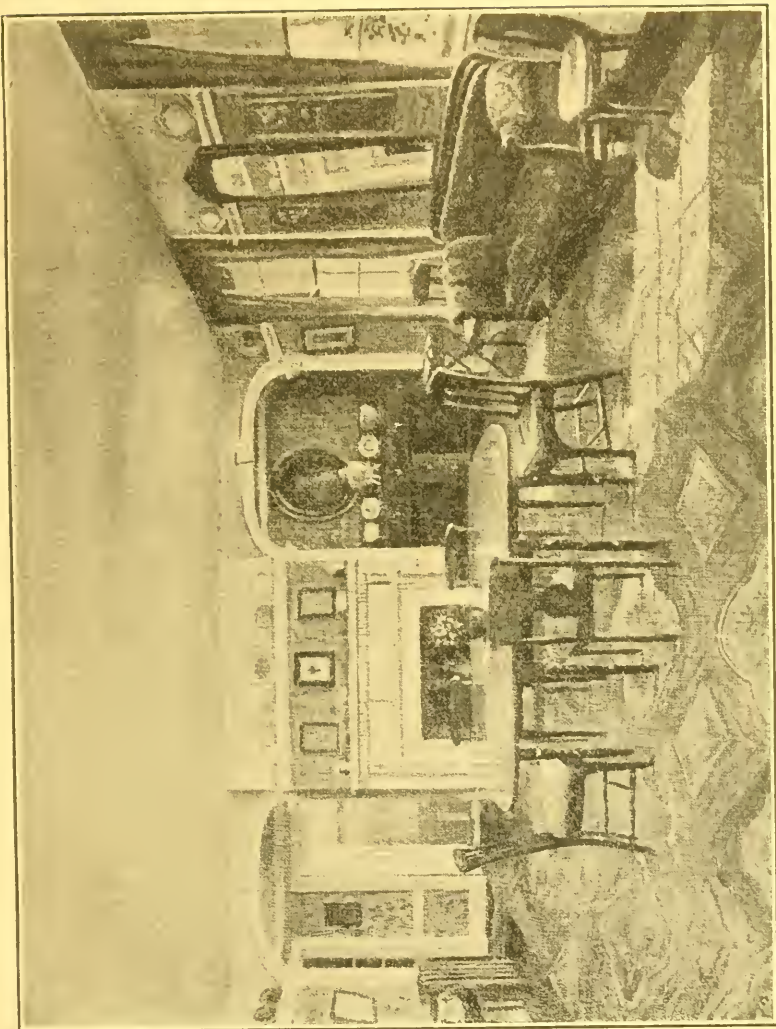
Francis and his wife had a good old-fashioned family of eight children, whose coming and delightful influence in the homestead must have greatly cheered Madam Brett. Robert, her other surviving son, married Catheryna Du Bois and took up his residence elsewhere upon the family lands. The homestead plot later became the inheritance of the children of the elder son.

It is said that Madam Brett galloped daily on horseback over her broad acres, superintending her many affairs. The development of the grain industry upon her many farms necessitated the establishment of allied enterprises,—a storehouse and a freighting depot.

The Frankfort Storehouse, established in 1743, became the commercial centre for the county farmers. The original account book, which contains preliminary terms of agreement and the individual payments of the twenty-two partners, is owned by Miss McKinnon, a descendant of Madam Brett.

The account is headed by Catheryna Brett, who paid her full share, although the land described "on the east





THE DINING ROOM  
(From a Painting by Rev. Robert Fulton Crary, D.D.)





side of Hudson's river" was purchased from Francis Brett, her son, to whom she had doubtless previously conveyed it. The house, it appears, was divided into twenty separate rooms, or divisions, equal to the rights and numbers of whole shares. The lots were said to have been "fairly drawn" and there fell unto the proper share of Catherina Brett, the room or division No. 2.

As debtor, Madam Brett was charged "fifty-seven pounds to her one-twentieth share of Frankfort Storehouse, land and improvements calculated."

Apparently she did not pay all this indebtedness in specie; she probably set her slaves to work upon the building, for to her later credit is acknowledged "By labour had done at sundry times at Frankfort Storehouse two pounds fourteen shillings." Again, she paid a carpenter, James Titus, six pounds three shillings,—and for the liberty of getting timber from her lands was allowed five pounds five shillings. For the same carpenters she appears to have furnished food and to have had her young son carry it to them, for the entry, "To Robert 13 shillings six pence" precedes the statement "By boarding the carpenters." It will be noted that there is no mention of their provisions of bedding; they probably slept under shelter at the scene of their work for the old phrase "To bed and board" is here but half charged.

She also paid, in 1743, "By the consideration money for land purchased in ComY. 28 pounds, thirteen shillings, nine pence," and that she loaned further moneys than those charged to her account is shown by her credit of "interest Money Due on fifteen pounds at 7 per cent. for 1 1-3 months."

These are indications that Madam Brett was blessed with business ability long before the era of its alleged dawn in feminine minds.

About the year 1710, forty-one Palatines (German refugees) settled at Newburgh, and their Lutheran minister established the first Church on the Bay. Thither Lieutenant Brett (former Vestryman of Trinity Parish), and his wife (daughter of the one-time Elder of the "Reformed Christian Religion"), were wont to cross in a canoe for Divine Service—an early and excellent example of Church Unity.

Notwithstanding this fact, when in 1731, a group of godly-minded people petitioned His Excellency John Montgomery "that the members of said congregation have agreed among themselves to erect and build a convenient Church to the public worship of God, nigh the said Fish Creek," Madam Brett returned to the faith of her fathers. One record states that Madam Brett gave the land to the congregation—another that seven and a half acres were purchased from her—this land comprising a part of the larger glebe which surrounded the building. The historic Dutch Church reared thereon was the first religious edifice built in the Rombout Precinct. It became dear to the heart of the lady of the Manor, and before her death in 1764, she gave "225 pounds lawful currency," which was termed by the congregation "Mistress Brett's legacy."

Henry D. B. Bailey, author of *Local Tales and Sketches*, published in 1874, recounts the attendance of Madam Brett at the marriage ceremony of the Dutch pastor, Rev. Mr. Van Nist, who conjointly served the two congregations of Fishkill and Poughkeepsie:

"As the hour of twelve drew near, the excitement became intense and what added more to the enthusiasm was the appearance of Madam Brett, in her coach drawn by four horses, coming down Main Street (Poughkeepsie) with two negroes on the front seat

and one on the rear of the coach, whose business was to open the door."

Well we may love to dwell in fancy upon the courageous personality, the dignified labors, gracious diplomacy and honest enterprise of Madam Brett, whose character outlined in strength and sweetness is the only portrait which exists of Fishkill's first hostess and earliest benefactor.

"Where she found a stranger,—there she left a friend."

When it is remembered that the dark-skinned Indians, as well as the pioneer settlers of her own race, accorded love and honor to her name, we do well to call it again in mind and gather joyously in her homestead.

By her will, drawn March 14, 1763, she made wise division of her property, prefaced by these pious words:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Catheryna Brett of FishKill in Dutchess County and in the Province of New York, Widow, being aged and infirm in body but of sound and disposing mind memory and understanding,—thanks be given to Almighty God for the same, and calling to mind the certainty of death and the uncertain time thereof do make and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following, that is to say, first and principally I recommend my precious and Immortal Soul into the Hands of Almighty God who gave it, and my Body to the earth to be decently interred at the discretion of my Executors hereafter named in hope of a Glorious Resurrection and as to such Worldly estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me with I give, devise and dispose thereof in manner in form following."

Francis Brett, the eldest son, inherited the share in the Frankfort Storehouse, 100 pounds Current

Money, the Negro wench Molly, five farms, and one-half of all the estate,—the other half passed to the children of Robert Brett, who had previously died. She further devised to her son Robert's children "the wench called Coban, and if sold she to have the liberty of Chusing her own master. I also order that if my wench Molly should be sold that she have the liberty of Chusing her own Master with whom she will live."

We can picture the death of the aged and infirm body, attended in respectful sorrow from the beloved earthly home by her son and grandchildren, her colored maids, Molly and Coban, and a grieving populace.

She was buried in the glebe, so near to the Church that when it was subsequently enlarged, her grave was overshadowed by the pulpit; a worthy resting place of hallowed sanctity for the brave Lady Bountiful. The Brett descendants have reared a tablet to her memory, which is here reproduced.

Upon Francis Brett's second daughter, Hannah, depends the next chapter of the occupancy of the homestead. On April 6, 1763, attired in a striped silk wedding gown (a fragment of which is preserved by the present owner of the homestead), she gave her hand and heart to young Henry Schenck, son of Judge Abraham Schenck and Elsie Vandervoort, his wife. The Judge had served for five sessions in the Court of Common Pleas of King's County, Long Island, and was representative of that County in the Colonial Legislature.

An interesting and timely discovery, made by Miss Florence Guernsey, has brought to light a letter written to her mother, the late Mrs. Egbert Guernsey, by a cousin, George E. Schenck, which relates a tradition we may well emphasize in this year of the Hudson-Fulton celebration.

The President of the Dutch East India Company



In Memoriam  
Madame Catharyna Brett,

widow of  
Lieutenant Roger Brett, R.N.,  
and daughter of

Francis Rombout,

a grantee of the Rombout Patent,  
Born in the City of New York, 1687,  
Died in Rombout Precinct : Fishkill : 1764.  
To this church she was a liberal contributor  
and underneath its pulpit her body is interred.

This Tablet  
was erected by her descendants  
and others interested in the  
Colonial history of Fishkill,  
A.D. 1894.



in 1609 was Admiral Van Schenck of the Navy of Holland. Believing in the importance of Henry Hudson's quest for the Northwest passage to India, the Admiral allowed his son, Sir Roeloffe Schenck, as super cargo, to embark with Henry Hudson and accompany the famous expedition of the Half Moon. Young Schenck participated in the thrilling adventures which marked the discovery of our river, and accompanied Hudson upon the return voyage. They landed at Dartmouth, England, says this letter, and so aroused the jealousy of the English East India Company, by the recital of their discovery, that the members influenced Hudson to re-enter their employ. But the "Super Cargo," Roeloffe Schenck, carried to Holland the news of the voyage—although it is averred that the Half Moon was detained from its return to Holland until Hudson had sailed thence in an English ship, upon his final voyage in 1610.

The glowing account of the newly discovered land, as related by Sir Roeloffe to his father, Admiral Van Schenck, enabled him to inspire seventeen business men of Amsterdam to form a trading Company for the traffic in furs with the American Indians. An expedition, numbering sixty natives of Holland, led by Roeloffe Schenck, sailed in 1610 for America, and established a trading post in Boswyck (now Bushwick) Creek, and Flockland (now Flatland), Long Island.

Mr. George Schenck further alleged that in 1852 the ruins of the old mill, established by these settlers, were visible; and in the old burying ground some two hundred and fifty descendants of Roeloffe Schenck were interred. Among the signatures of persons who, in response to Governor Nicoll's edict, took an oath of allegiance during 1678, to the Crown of England, in Boswyck and Flatland, appear the names "Roeloffe Martin Schenck, Jr., 47 years; Jan Martins Schenck,



37 years; Jacob Schenck, 23 years,—possibly sons of the sturdy Roeloffe, Super Cargo of the Half Moon.

Johannes Schenck, who emigrated from Holland to America in 1683, is recorded in Flatbush as Town Clerk in 1694, and in 1712 he purchased the mill property at Bushwick, doubtless the same building set up by his enterprising kinsman, Sir Roeloffe. It was Johannes' great-grandson, Henry, born 1745, who coming forth from the ancestral home at Bushwick, wooed and won fair Hannah Brett in the homestead of her grandmother.

Again to the Manor born, came a numerous generation,—the children of Henry Schenck and Hannah, nine in all,—sturdy girls and boys of the third generation within these walls. Henry Schenck's inheritance of intellect and courage were soon to be tried and tested, for in 1775 Fishkill saw the portentous foreshadowings of the War of the Revolution.

The Account Book of Frankfort Storehouse states that no meetings were held from 1776 until 1781 "On account of hostilities." Poor Hannah Brett, wedded to a soldier in war time, must have passed many an anxious hour when in 1775 she learned that her husband had been appointed Major of Colonel Swartout's regiment. He brought home his commission dated October 17th, and from that time she helped buckle on his sword for the right cause which was dear to all hearts.

The battle of Lexington had aroused the country to action and the men of Fish Kill were eager and ready for organization. At the meeting of the Provincial Congress means were devised for general safety. Henry Schenck was one of a Committee of Observation, which met on July 13th. Already Washington had been appointed Commander of the Army. From that time the movements of the Committee are on rec-





SILHOUETTE OF MRS. ISAAC DE PEYSTER TELLER  
(née ALICE SCHENCK)

(From Original owned by Mrs. Robert Fulton Crary)



ord, and are copiously quoted in an early history of Fishkill by T. Van Wyck Brinckerhoff. The meetings took place at the house of Captain Jacob Griffin, on the Hopewell Turnpike, and on August 18, 1775, Henry Schenck and William Van Wyck were ordered to purchase arms for Captain Beedle's company. Subsequently the homestead became the scene for many brave interviews of uniformed soldiers, and its hospitable doors were swung open to every friend of liberty. An old paper written by the late Miss Hannah Teller (who was a sincere student of local history of her own and earlier times), states that George Washington and Abraham Yates, Jr., while presiding over the Fishkill Convention, were entertained by Major Schenck, and that Washington came from his headquarters at Newburgh and received royal welcome from the social Major and his hospitable wife. The Marquis La Fayette and Baron Steuben were also here entertained; no wonder that the walls to-day breathe the spirit of peace for which those early patriots planned and wrought.

Major Schenck was appointed Quartermaster for the troops, and rations for the hungry army were stored in the ample cellar of the Homestead. Here were sheltered a relay of men who ranged in rows on the floor of the east room, now known as the "long room," slept off their fatigue.

The wife of the gallant Major must have had her hands full during these stirring days, for her troop of little children claimed her first attention. Her second daughter, Alice, born in 1765, who became the owner of the Homestead in later years, was ten years old in war time. Strange sights and sounds must have contributed to her wondering mind as she watched her father don his uniform and saw her mother clinging

to him, whisper words of hope and encouragement, as he fared forth to join his troop.

Alice Schenck's childish copybook is in the possession of the author, a quaint book filled with careful penmanship and high resolves. She was a pupil at Peter Van Steen Bergh's School at Hopewell, and after she had "set the alphabet" on July 7th, 1778, and transcribed

"Your Delight and your Care Should be to Write Fair."

her pages present a brave array of pleasantries and pious sentiments. In February she wrote:

"Now Jack and Joan may tell a merry tale  
Close by the fire with a mug of ale;  
Pancakes and fritters now in season are,  
And young men they for Valentines prepare."

But she also inscribed less hopeful mottoes,—“Each moment should Remind us of our End,” and “Our Life here is but a journey to the Next World,” perchance in recognition of the horrors of war, for another page bears the amicable inscription,

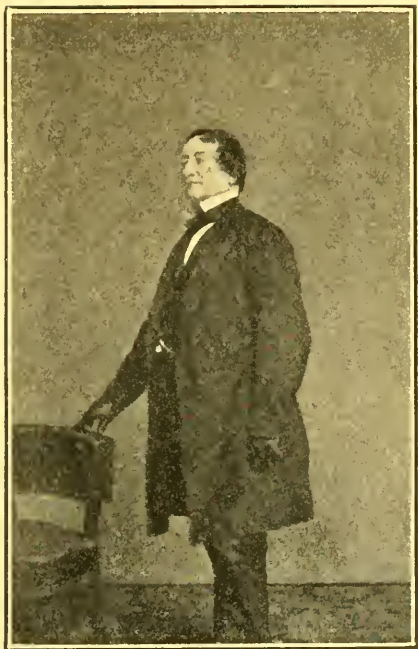
“Triumph Not over Enemies,” and again, with reluctant note:

“Our British Merchants Foreign Trades pursue,—  
They vend our goods and Bring us Riches too.”

When national peace descended upon the land, Henry Schenck took up some personal problems. The following letter,\* which he sent to his wife from New

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\*Original in possession of Charles Mayer Van Kleeck, Esq



THE HON. ISAAC TELLER  
Member of Congress  
(From old Photograph)



York by Captain Hunt "with sundry articles," reveals two perplexities:

NEW YORK, Sept. 9, 1785.

*Dear Hannah,*

the Tryal which is the Cause of my Being here is as yet not Come on, and it seems Rather uncertain when it will Come to pass, so that I shall be under the Necessity of Staying till some time next week. Genll. Courtlandt and a son of Mr. John Cortlandt, who Claim Lands against us in the Gore will be at our house the Latter End of Next week in Order to settle the Dispute subsisting between us, there will be no Opportunity for me to Come up with the Sloop, which will Cause me to Come with the Stage. I have sent you the Little articles you sent for. I am,

Dear Hannah yours &c.

(signed) HENRY SCHENCK.

On April 12, 1790, another bride was won in the homestead, when Alice Schenck became the wife of Isaac de Peyster Teller, fifth in descent from that same William Teller, proprietor of Schenectady.

His father, Isaac, was a son of Oliver Teller and Cornelia De Peyster, whose marriage, solemnized in 1712, brought three interesting heirlooms to the possession of the present owner of the homestead,—the silver wedding tankard inscribed in primitive marking with the initials of the bride and groom, O. & C. T.; the resplendent yellow and white brocade wedding gown of the fair Cornelia; also her engagement ring of diamonds set in a true-lover's knot. The portrait of the bride's father, Isaac De Peyster, now adorns the dining-room of the homestead. Isaac had married Maria Van Ball, half sister of Madam Brett,

by Helena Teller's second marriage before she was espoused by Mayor Rombout.

Evidently beguiled by the descriptions of the pioneer settlers, the De Peysters had followed the Bretts to Fishkill and had purchased in 1743 the mill property from Madam Brett. In 1775 the said Abraham De Peyster, purchaser of the mill, bequeathed this property to his nephews, Oliver and Isaac de Peyster Teller. The bride of the latter, Alice Schenck, therefore began her housekeeping during 1790 in the old mill house, now known as the Newlin House, at the mouth of the creek, where for many years she and her husband resided.

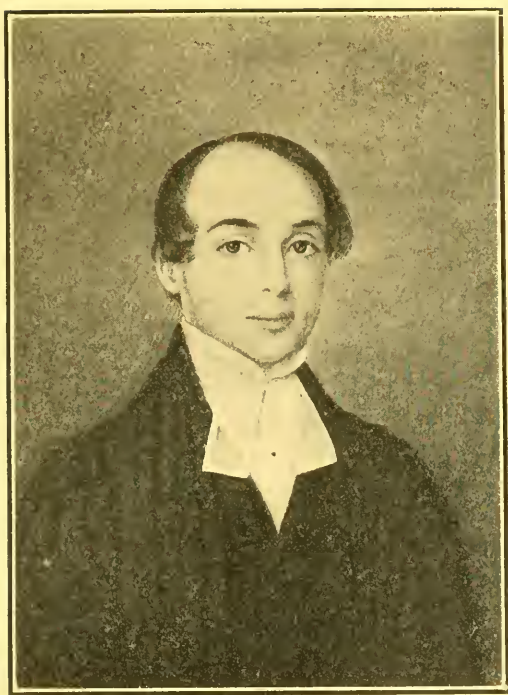
In 1791 Major Henry Schenck served as Member of the Assembly, and there are reasons to believe he was in every way a useful and respected citizen. He died during 1799 and was buried in the Reformed Churchyard near Fishkill Landing. In the settlement of his estate the homestead property was purchased from the widow, or "doweress" as she was called, by Isaac De Peyster Teller, son-in-law. The deed, dated December 23rd, 1800, described the tract of one hundred and eighty-six acres (and 120 acres on the mountain) as part of the "old farm"—and there is also mention of the "old farm mansion." It is interesting to note that one hundred and nine years ago the house was considered old. Major Schenck's widow, who survived him until 1825, made her home with her daughter, Mrs. Teller, whose husband,\* with the genius of wise farming, developed the property until it became locally renowned for its grain and other farm products.

Again a numerous flock of children arrived to bless the Homestead: Hannah, the eldest daughter, a

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\*Isaac De Peyster Teller was appointed Sergeant Major of Lt. Col. Hasbrouck's Regiment of Militia, Sept. 23, 1808.





MINIATURE OF REV. ROBERT BOYD VAN KLEECK, D.D.  
(From Original owned by Mrs. Robert Fulton Crary)



woman of forceful character, who died unmarried, October 6, 1857; Henry B. Teller, who married Catherine Storm of Stormville; Caroline, Isaac, Maria, Ann Eliza and Louisa—all are Teller names which survive in the memories of old-time residents. One other daughter, Margaret Schenck Teller, born in 1808 (the next to the youngest of the many daughters), was the only one to give her hand in marriage—the other five sisters and their brother Isaac remained so happy in their home life that they never exchanged or altered it.

Isaac became a member of Congress and as a Country Esquire and gentleman, was much respected and beloved. His generous nature allowed many privileges for the poor people who dwelt upon the family mountain lands, and to this day their descendants relate his bounty:—"he never charged us nothin' for wood, and he'd pay us money for the cuttin' of it."

He was a great admirer of Henry Clay, and his white horse which lived to a good old age, and was finally buried in the glen, bore the name of this great statesman. This horse, harnessed to the old-time buggy, in which the Hon. Isaac Teller was wont to drive over his farm land, one day grazed quietly in a grain field, so long idle that a farm hand came to see why the master tarried. He had died of heart disease in the carriage, and his sorrowing family and friends grieved greatly at his loss.

During the residence of the Teller family in the homestead, the main street of the village had gained prominence and it was decided to reverse the entrance so the former rear became the front. Mrs. Teller put her name upon the brass knocker which still announces the many welcome guests. It may be interesting to note that in the first two years of the present owner's residence, no fewer than twelve hundred callers and

visitors have passed over that threshold. Who says that calling has gone out of fashion?

Throughout this generation and those preceding it, there was no Episcopal Church nearer than Fishkill Village. In 1832 Miss Hannah Teller, aided by her sisters, established a Sunday School, which met each week in the long room of the house, and from this missionary effort arose the inception of a local parish. The Hon. Isaac Teller, in order to procure a minister of the Episcopal Faith, drove to West Point upon the ice to bring back the Rev. Mr. Hackley, Chaplain of the Post, who conducted Divine Service in a subsequently rented room in Matteawan.

Later the Teller family gave a plot of land at the corner\* of their orchard, upon which a building known as St. Anna's Church was reared. The name was a discreet departure from the original suggestion of Mr. John Pintard, of New York, who wished to name it for Miss Hannah Teller,—she suggested the alternative.

To the charge of this interesting congregation a young clergyman was called, the Rev. Robert Boyd Van Kleeck, son of Dr. Baltus Livingston Van Kleeck,† a prominent physician of Newburgh. A graduate of Columbia University, he was a devout and sympathetic preacher, adviser and friend. The influ-

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\*This plot was later sold to the Methodist congregation for their present edifice.

†Baltus Livingston Van Kleeck's ancestor, Captain Van Kleeck, who commanded a company of horse-men in 1775 had received the following orders from the Commanding General:

Headquarters  
Valley Forge,  
March 10th, 1778.

Sir; Extend your picket across the bridge with a patrol on the Morristown Road as far as the King of Prussia Tavern, with orders to bring in all strangers unable to give a good account of themselves, also all persons found loitering near the lines, such arrests to be immediately reported to Gen'l Varnum.

(signed) Go. Washington,  
Commg.

To

Captn. Van Kleeck.

(Original letter owned 1909 by Ven. Archdeacon Van Kleeck.)



MINIATURE OF MRS. ROBERT BOYD VAN KLEECK  
Née Margaret Schenck Teller  
(From Original owned by Mrs. Thomas R. Harris)



ence of his life is still potent. When he came as Lay Reader to take up the first work in the new parish, he was welcomed at the Homestead and learned to know the young teacher of the Sunday School infant class, Miss Margaret Schenck Teller, sister of Miss Hannah. It is not surprising therefore, to note their marriage in the parlor of the Homestead, on June 9th, 1834, when with Bishop Onderdonk of New York as officiant, the ceremony was made the occasion of family and friendly happiness. The fair bride was attired in a dotted white silk gown which is still preserved in the Homestead, and one would have to go far to find a handsomer man than the young minister, who is remembered by old-time residents. One recently told a descendant of the pair, that she had never "seen a prettier minister in any pulpit!"\*

Hospitality abounded in "Teller's Villa," as it was then termed, and old-time letters throw light upon a life of happy serenity. When Mrs. Teller died in 1845 her son Isaac and the five unmarried daughters lived in the old home until, one by one, they were called to their rest. Finally the house came into the possession of the last surviving daughter, Mrs. Van Kleeck, who loved its charm and returned to it as often as her husband could be spared from the parochial duties of his several parishes. Upon his retirement from his last charge, Hyde Park, Massachusetts, they made it their permanent home.

Happy memories here abound: vacation days of childhood spent with fun-loving companions of kinship under the Colonial roof-tree. From a Canton jar upon the shelf of the "back pantry"† arose the fragrant scent of ginger nuts,—always and forever they

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\*Dr. Van Kleeck later became Rector of St. George's, Flushing, and St. Paul's Church, Troy, N. Y.

†Removed to make room for the present stair-case.



abounded in that unfailing cruse. Harvest apples of the orchard ripened in August and their red cheeked globes formed many a hammock feast.

Harry Clay, in the serene comfort of old age, jogged along the country roads and carried a load of happy-hearted children. There is to-day in the attic the little, carpet covered stool upon which the youngest child perched, between the sheltering knees of an elder. Driving the cows home from the far-away pasture up Teller Avenue was a pastime for late afternoons—feeding the chickens was one for early mornings. Well do I remember throwing India china plate and all to the hungry, crowding hens who frightened it from my grasp, for every day we ate from the old blue plates which now only come forth on Sundays. On rainy days we played checkers, and on Sunday evenings sang hymns in the parlor,—old and young joining heartily in the ministry of song. One child would be esconced in the green velvet swinging chair, which creaked an accompaniment, delightful to an untutored ear. The logs dropped upon the hearth, the embers faded, but the light of memory will forever cherish the vision of faces which were strong in faith, honest in purpose, and calm in resignation. These treasured recollections are not mine alone,—they jointly belong to a generation of children who happily trooped to visit their grandparents.



SILHOUETTE OF REV. ROBERT BOYD VAN KLEECK, PREACHING  
(From Original owned by Ven. Archdeacon Van Kleeck)



## GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN.

I can see long back in fancy, in kaleidoscopic view,  
'Mid the circling disks of time-rings my mind is gazing  
through,  
A fairy land of beauty which my early childhood knew,  
Where the purest, sweetest flowers and the softest  
mosses grew.

The paths were stiffly outlined with a bordering of box,  
The flower-beds flashed brightly with marigold and  
phlox,  
While the grapevines grew precisely in a fashion  
orthodox,  
To evade the crafty cunning of each spoiling two-  
legg'd fox.

I can see the drooping pear tree stooping low to touch  
the ground  
To deposit ripened sweetness where it soonest could be  
found,  
While the honey-bees grew heavy, as they circled  
round and round,  
And clapped their wings in soft applause, with hazy,  
happy sound.

The currants flashed to crimson 'neath the brightness  
of the sun,  
Until,—all red and rosy,—they shook their heads for  
fun,

And tumbled off demurely, in the green grass one by  
one,  
To wait until the children should down the pathway run.

And then, the very best of all, the merry little brook  
That dashed along and splashed along with circling  
curve and crook,  
Yet held its little mirrors where the lilies bent to look  
And gave us tiny concerts from a natural music book.

As I tell myself the story, my heart is all aglow  
With reverberating pleasures that from the memory  
grow,  
So I write down glimpses of it, that others too may  
know,  
The sweetness and completeness of the distant long ago.

ALICE CRARY.

*(Reprint from the Ladies' Home Journal.)*

APPENDIX.  
EXEMPLIFICATION OF FRANCIS RUM-  
BOUT'S PATENT.\*

Dated 17th Oct<sup>r</sup>. 1685.

RUMBOUT PATENT

dated February 8, 1682, given to Francis Rumbout and Gulyne Verplanke. It was given when Thomas Dongan was Lieut. Governor and Vice-Admiral under his Majesty James II, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland.

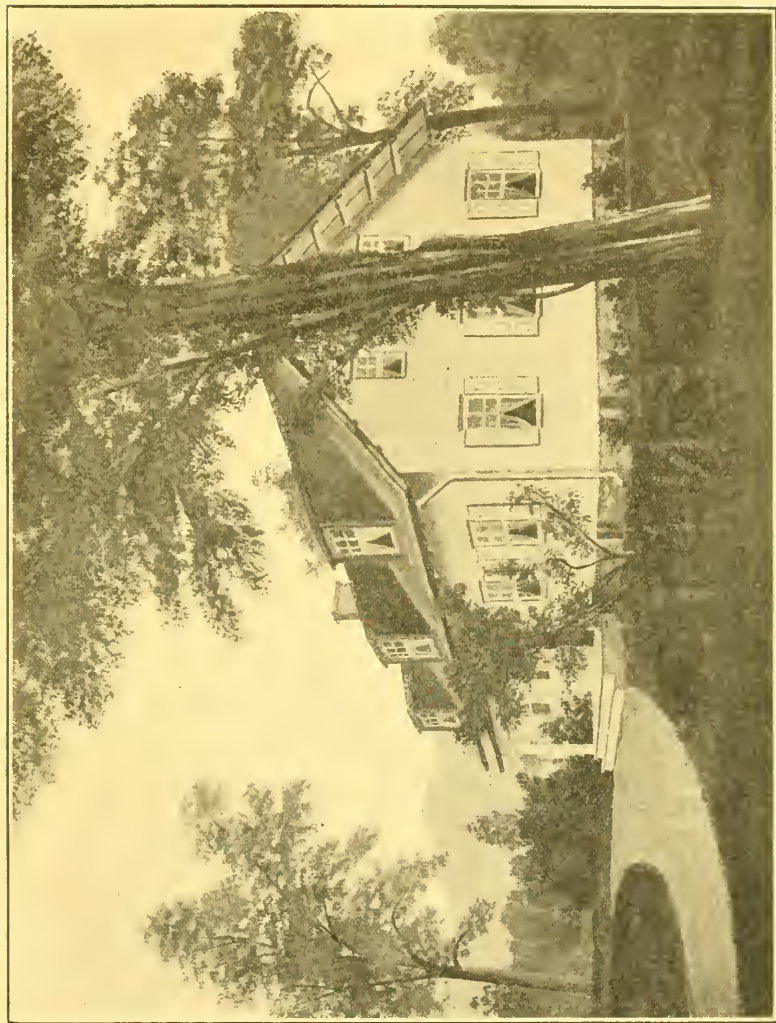
*The People of the State of New York, By the Grace of God Free and Independent. To all to whom these presents shall come send Greeting. Know Ye That in our Records in our Secretary's Office of our said State we have seen certain Letters Patent In the words following to wit. "Thomas Dongan, Lieut. Governor and Vice Admiral under his Majesty James the Second By the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith & a Supream Lord and Proprietor of the Colony and Province of New Yorke & its Dependencies in America, &c. To all to whom these presents shall come Sendeth Greeting. Whereas Francis Rumbouts and Gulyne Verplanke of the Citty of New Yorke, Merchants by virtue of and in pursuance of an order and lysence of the Commander in Chiefe and Council of the said Province of New Yorke bearing date the twenty-eight day of February in the Yeare of our Lord one thousand*

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\*From original, owned by Mrs. Robert Fulton Crary.

six hundred eighty two, Have according to the Law and practice of the said Province for a valuable consideration purchased of the natives and Indian Owners, their right title interest claime and demand of in and to all that certaine Tract or parcell of land herein after mentioned and expressed for their owne proper use as by the Indian Deed of Sale thereof bearing date the eighth Day of August in the Yeare of our Lord one thousand six hundred eighty three remaining upon record in the Secretary's Office of the said Province may more fully and att large appeare. *And whereas* the said Gulyne Verplanke is since deceased butt before his decease made his last will and testament in writing and therein and thereby made constituted and appointed Henrita his widdow and relict his whole and sole Executrix who hath since the decease of the said Gulyne Verplanke proved the said Will and taken upon her the burthen of Executrix and hath since intermarried with Jacobus Kipp of the City of New Yorke aforesaid Mercht., by virtue of which Will and the intermarriage as aforesaid, hee, the said Jacobus Kipp is become interested in and Intitled to such share title and interest as the said Gulyne Verplanke att the time of his decease had in the said Tract or parcell of land hereafter mentioned by virtue of the said purchase as aforesaid. *And whereas* in the life time of the said Gulyne Verplanke it was agreed between the said Francis Rumbouts and the said Gulyne Verplanke & Stephanus Van Courtlandt of the City of New Yorke aforesaid Merchants, that he, the said Stephanus Van Courtlandt paying the full third parte of the charge of the purchase aforesaid made by them the said Francis Rumbouts and Gulyne Verplanke as aforesaid should have conveyed and assured to him the one full third parte of all their right title and interest of in and to the said Tract or parcel of land hereafter mentioned





THE HOMESTEAD, WITH VIEW OF MOUNT BEACON, 1909  
(From a Painting by Rev. Robert Fulton Crary, D.D.)



by virtue of and pursuant to which agreemt. they the said Francis Rumbouts, Jacobus Kipp and the said Henrita his Wife have since the decease of the said Gulyne Verplanke conveyed and assured unto the said Stephanus Van Courtland, his Heirs and assigns for ever, one full third parte of all their right title and Interest of in and to the said Tract or parcell of land hereafter mentioned as in and by their certaine writing or conveyance bearing date the fifth day of September instant may more fully and at large appeare. *Now Know Ye* That by virtue of the Commission and authority unto me given for and in consideration of the yearly rent herein after mentioned and reserved and for divers other causes and considerations me thereunto moving I have granted ratified and confirmed and by these presents Doe grant rattifie and confirme unto the said Francis Rumbouts, Jacobus Kipp and Stephanus Van Courtland all that Tract or parcell of land situate lying and being on the east side of Hudsons River att the north side of the highlands Begining from the south side of a creeke called the Fishkill and by the Indians Matteawan and from thence northward along said Hudsons River five hundred rodd beyond the greate Wappins Kill called by the Indians Mawenawasigh being the northerly bounds and from thence into the woods foure houres goeing, that is to say sixteene English miles, always keeping five hundred rodd distant from the north side of said greate Wappingers Creek however it runns as also from the said Fishkill or creeke called Matteawan along the said Fish Creek into the Woods att the foott of the said high hills including all the read or low lands att the South side of said Creek with an easterly line four howers goeing, that is to say sixteen english miles into the Woods and from thence northerly to the end of the foure howers going towitt sixteen English miles or

line drawne att the north side of the five hundred Rodd beyond the greate Wappingar Creeke or Kill called Mawenawasigh together with all and all manner of Rivers, Rivolets, Runns, Streams and liberty to build erect and make any Mill or Mills thereon feedings pastures woods underwoods Trees waters water courses ponds pooles pitts swamps moores marshes meadows easiements proffitts and commoditys fishing fowling hunting hawking mines mineralls Quarrayes Royall Mines excepted Royalties franchises and apurtenances whatsoever to the said Tract or parcell of land within the Bounds and lymitts aforesaid belonging or in any wise appurtaineing *To have and to hold* the said Tract or parcell of land and all and singular other the premisses with their and every of their appurtenences unto the said Francis Rumbouts, Jacobus Kipp and Stephanus Van Courtland, their Heires and Assignes forever unto the only proper use and behoofe of them the said Francis Rumbouts Jacobus Kipp and Stephanus Van Courtland their heirs and assigns forever. *Yielding and paying therefore* Yearly and every Year for the use of our Soverigne *Lord James the second* by the Grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland King Defender of the faith &c his heires or Successors or such Officers as by him or them shall be from time to time appointed to receive the same six bushells of good merchantable winter Wheate on every twenty-fifth days of March att the City of New Yorke aforesaid

*In Witnessee* whereof I have signed these Presents with my hand & caused the publique Seale of the said Province to be hereunto affixed and these presents to be entered upon Record in the Secretary's Office of the said Province this 17th Day of October in the first Yeare of his said Maties. Reigne and in the Yeare of our Lord 1685 Thomas Dongan."

*In Testimony whereof* We have caused the said Letters Patent, to be herein and hereby exemplified, and the Great Seal of our said State to be to these presents affixed.

Witness our trusty and well beloved *George Clinton*, Esquire, Governor of our said State General and Commander in Chief of all the Militia and Admiral of the Navy of the same, this twenty fifth day of June in the eighth Year of our Independence, and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty four.

(Signed) GEORGE CLINTON.

Passed the Secretary's office (the word (and) between fourth and fifth line, the word (and) between twenty-first and twenty-second line of first page and the word (winter) between tenth and eleventh line of page the second all interlined) this twenty-fifth day of June one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

(signed) LEWIS A. SCOTT D Secry.

BOOK OF PATENTS, VOL. 5, PAGE 72.

Albany, New York.

The following Indian Deed of Sale, Recorded for Mr. Francis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, the 14th day of August, 1683:

TO ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE To Whom This Present Writeing Shall Come, Sackoraghkigh for himselfe, and in the name of Megriesken, Sachem of the Wappinger Indians, Queghsjehapaein, Niessjawejahos, Queghout, Asotews, Wappegereck, Nathindeaeniw, Wappappee, Ketaghkainis, Meakhaghoghkan, Mierham, Peapightapeieuw, Queghitaeuw, Minesawogh, Katariogh, Kightapiuhogh, Rearowogh, Meggrek, Sejay, Wienangeck, Maenemanew, and Ginghstyerem, true and Lawful Owners and Indian Proprietors of the Land herein Menchoned, send Greeting, KNOW YEE—that for and in Consideration of a Certain Sume or Quantity of Money, Wampum, and diverse other Goods in a Schedull hereunto Annexed Perticularly Menconed and Expresed to them the said Indians, in Hand Payed by Mr. Francis Rumbouts and Gulyne Ver Planke, both of the City of New Yorke, Merchants, the Receipt whereof they, the said Indians, Doe hereby Acknowledge, and therewith owne themselves to be fully payed, Contented and Sattisfied, and thereof and of every Parte and Parcell Doe hereby Acquitt, Exonerate and Discharge them, the said Francis Rumbouts and Gulyne V. Planke, their Heirs and Assignes, have Given, Granted, Bargained,



Sold, Aliened, Enfeoffd, and Confirmed, and by these Presents Doe fully Cleerly and Absolutely Give, Grant, Bargaine, Sell, and Alien, Enfeoffe, and Confirme unto the said ffancis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, All that Tract or Parcell of Land Scituate, Lyeing and being on the East side of Hudson's River, at the north side of the High Lands, Beginning from the South side of A Creek Called the fresh Kill, and by the Indians Matteawan, and from thence Northward along said Hudson's River five hund<sup>d</sup> Rodd bejond the Great Wappins Kill, called by the Indians Mawenawasigh, being the Northerly Bounds, and from thence into the Woods fouer Houers goeing, alwayes Keeping five hund<sup>d</sup> Rodd Distant from the North side of said Wappinges Creeke, however it Runns, as alsoe from the said fresh Kill or Creeke called Matteawan, along the said fresh Creeke into the Woods att the foot of the said High Hills, including all the Reed or Low Lands at the South side of the said Creeke, with an Easterly Line fouer Houers going into the Woods, and from thence Northerly to the end of fouer Houers Goeing or Line Drawne att the North side of the five hund<sup>d</sup> Rodd Bejoyand the Greate Wappinger Creek or Kill called Mawenawasigh, together with all the Lands, Soyles, Meadows, both fresh and Salt Pastures, Commons, Wood Land, Marshes, Rivers, Rivoletts, Streams, Creekes, Waters, Lakes, and whatsoever else to the said Tract or Parcell of Land within the Bounds and Limitts aforesaid is Belonging, or any wise Appurteining, without any Resevacon of Herbage, Trees, or any other thing Growing or Being thereupon, To have and to hold the said Tract or Parcell of Land, Meadow, Ground, and Primisses, with their and every of their Appurtennces, and all the Estate, Right, Title, Interest, Clayme, and Demand of them the said Indian Proprietors, and each and every of them, of, in, and



to, the same, and Every Parte thereof, unto them the said ffrancis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, their Heires and Assignes, to the Sole and only Proper use, Benefitt and Behoofe of them, the said ffrancis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, *their* Heires and Assignes for Ever, And they the said Indians Doe for themselves and their Heires and every of them Covenant, Promise, and Engage that the said ffrancis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, their Heires and Assigns, shall and may from henceforth for ever Lawfully, Peaceably, and Quietly have, hold, Possesse, and Enjoye the said Tract or Parcell of Land, and all and Singuler other the Primisses, with their Appertences without any Lett, Hindrance, or Interrupcon whatsoever of or by them, the said Indians, Proprietors or their Heires, or of any other Person or Persons, whatsoever clayming or that hereafter shall or may Clayme, by, from or under them, or Either of them, And that they shall and will, upon the reasonable Request and Demand made by the said Francis Rumbouts and Gulyne Ver Planke, Give and Deliver Peaceably and Quietly Possession of the said Tract or Parcell of Land and Primisses, or of some Parte thereof, for and in the Name of the whole, unto such Person or Persons as by the said ffrancis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke, shall be Appointed to Receive the same. *In Witness whereof*, the said Sackoraghkigh, for himselfe and in the Name of Megriskar, Sachem of Wappinger Indians, Queghsjehapeieuw, Niessjawejhos, Queghout, Asotewas, Wappegereck, Nathindaew, Wappape, Ketaghkanns, Meakaghoghkan, Mierham, Peapightapaeuw, Queghhitaew, Memesawogh, Katariogh, Kightapinkog, Rearawogh, Meggiech, Sejay, Wienangeck, Maenemaew, Guighstierm, the Indian Owners and Proprietors afores<sup>d</sup>, have hereunto sett their Hands and Seales in N. Yorke, the Eighth

day of August, in the 35th Yeare of his Ma<sup>ties</sup> Reigne,  
Anno Dom, 1683.

The marke of  $\varepsilon$  SAKORAGHUCK, (L. S.)

The marke of X QUEGHSJEHAPAEIW, (L. S.)

Signed Sealed and Delivered

in the psen of us

Antho: Brockholls,

P. V. Courtlandt,

John West.

The marke of CLAES the Indian X Inter. (verite.)

The marke of a MERHAM, (L. S.)

The marke of & PEAPIGHTAPAEW, (L. S.)

The marke of 7 QUEGHHITAEMW, (L. S.)

The marke of 8 MEINESAWOGH, (L. S.)

The marke of o KOTARIOGH, (L. S.)

The marke of  $\oslash$  KIGHTAPINKOJH, (L. S.)

The marke of  $\smile$  REAROWOGH, (L. S.)

The marke of 9 MEGGENKSEJAY, (L. S.)

The marke of  $\cup$  WIENARGECK, (L. S.)

The marke of o MAENEMANEW, (L. S.)

The marke of 2 GUIGHSTJEREM, (L. S.)

The marke of (- KETAGHKANNES, (L. S.)

The marke of V MEAKHAJH, (L. S.)

The marke of O OGHKAN, (L. S.)

The marke of X NIESSJAWEAJAHOS, (L. S.)

The marke of X QUEJHOUT, (L. S.)

The marke of X SJOTEWES, (L. S.)

The marke of X WAPPEGERECK, (L. S.)

The marke of X NATHINDAEUW, (L. S.)

The marke of X WAPPAPE, (L. S.)

A schedull or Peticuler of Money, Wampum and other goods Paid by Francis Rumbout and Gulyne Ver Planke for the purchase of the Land in the Deed hereunto annexed.

One hund<sup>d</sup> Royalls,  
One hund Pound Powder,  
Two hund fathom of White Wampum,  
One hund Barrs of Lead,  
One hundred fathom of black Wampum,  
thirty tobacco boxes ten holl adges,  
thirty Gunns, twenty Blankets,  
forty fathom of Duffills,  
twenty fathom of stroudwater Cloth.  
thirty Kittles, forty Hatchets.  
forty Hornes, forty Shirts.  
forty p stockings, twelve coates of R. B. & b. C.  
ten Drawing Knives.  
forty earthen Jugs.  
forty Bottles.  
forty Knives, fouer ankers rum.  
ten halfe, fatts Beere.  
two hund tobacco Pipes, &c.  
Eighty Pound Tobacco.

NEW YORK, August the 8th, 1683.

The above Peticulers were Delivered to the Indians in the Bill of Sale Menconed in the psence of us

(Signed) ANTHO: BROCKHALLS,

(Signed) P. V. COURTLANDT,

(Signed) JOHN WEST.

I do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the Original Record, compared therewith by me.

(Signed) LEWIS A. SCOTT, Secretary.

NOTE: FROM THE HISTORY OF THE  
VER PLANCK FAMILY.

BY WILLIAM EDWARD VER PLANCK.

A Royall or ryal was a coin formerly current in England, and equal to a half sovereign, or about \$2.50. Duffills or duffle, was coarse flannel. Wampum, the currency of the Indians, was adopted by the Dutch through necessity, for specie was scarce. It consisted of certain kinds of shells strung together. Governor Stuyvesant made several ineffectual attempts to fix its value, and to drive out the rough or inferior wampum brought into New Netherland by the New Englanders. Thus, about 1648, a fathom of *black* wampum was fixed by ordinance to be worth four guilders, or \$1.60. In 1662 twenty-four beads of white or twelve beads of black wampum were made equal in value to one stiver, or two cents. The value, however, continued to decline so that by 1683, the date of the Indian deed, a fathom of black wampum was probably worth about seventy-five cents. The other items in the schedule are obscure only by reason of their peculiar spelling:

"Hatches" for hatchets, "Howes" for hoes, "Fatts" for vats, etc. It has been estimated that the total value of the articles was about \$1,250.

DEC 11 1909

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# The Homestead of a Colonial Dame

By Alice Crary Sutcliffe













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